Its August, 1948, three years after the Russians liberated a tiny nation from German occupation. But the Red Army still patrols the small capitals rubble-strewn streets, and the ideals of the Revolution are but memories. With the war over, twenty-two-year-old Detective Emil Brod finally gets his chance to serve his country, investigating murders for the Peoples Militia. The victim in Emils first case is a state songwriter, but the facts point to a political motive and the ambitious Emil would like to investigate further. But even in his naivet, he realizes that the police academy never prepared him for this peculiar postwar environment, in which his colleagues in the homicide department think hes a spy, where lawlessness and corruption are the rules of the city, and in which hes still expected to investigate a murder. The Bridge of Sighs launches a unique series of literary crime novels featuring a dynamic cast of characters in an ever-evolving landscape: the politically volatile terrain of Eastern Europe in the second half of the twentieth century.

I have a new detective to add to favorites--Harry Bosch, Kinsey Millhone, Guido Brunetti -- and he is Emil Brod, 23 year-old newly hired homicide investigator for the People's Militia. The story is set in 1948's post Russia's liberating Brod's small country from German occupation. His first case is of a state's songwriter. The young detective is not welcomed by his fellow homicide investigators, making Brod waffle on his career decision. Having never read any fiction (contemporary) about this time period the history of the political and social upheaval was enticing to me witnessing, not only the killings that continue, but the desperation of the economy and people. The author, Olen Steinhauser, draws in the reader through this desperation seen in all the characters, a desperation that doesn't stop life nor Detective Comrade Brod from doing his job. This is Steinhauser's first novel and I look forward to more.